

Marine Safety Newsletter

US Coast Guard Marine Safety and Environmental Protection Directorate

Coast Guard Expands its War on Drugs

The Coast Guard created "Operation New Frontier" (first announced in September 1999) to employ the use of armed helicopters, MH-90s, and high-speed small rigid-hull inflatable boats, known as RIBs, stop small, high-speed smuggling vessels, or "go-fasts," which carry narcotics bound for the United States.

The helicopters and boat crews deploy state-of-the-art, non-lethal weapons to stop these fleeing vessels.

With their MH-90s and RIBs, the Coast Guard is authorized to drop sting grenades and blast laser-equipped .50-caliber machine gun bullets to disable the engines of fleeing boats. The helicopters patrol with Coast Guard cutters while working in pairs.

The evaluation of Operation New Frontier was completed on March 13, 2000, and of the six "go-fasts" vessels detected, all six have been successfully seized. These cases resulted in the seizure of the six vessels, 11,710 pounds of marijuana, 4,475 pounds of cocaine, and 20 arrests.

During the Fiscal Year of 1999, the approximately 10 million-dollar investment in this program has returned \$120 million in seized drugs.

The U.S. Coast Guard is hoping that the success of its new equipment against suspected drug runners will prompt Congress to approve the \$17 million needed to continue and expand the program.



MH-90 Helicopter

Inside:

- 2 Busy Hurricane Season Predicted
- 2 Former Coast Guard Commandant Dies
- 2 Clinton's Visit to the Coast Guard Academy is Confirmed
- 3 Mississippi River is 8th on Jeopardy List
- 3 CG Requests Per Feedback on Oil Spill Removal Classification
- 3 Coast Guard Reserve Slots Open
- 3 What's New on the World Wide Web
- 4 Supreme Court Upholds Federal Regulations
- 4 National Safe Boating Campaign 2000
- 4 Coast Guard Cutbacks
- 4 CG Requests Comments Pertaining to New Official Logbook
- 5 IMO Corner
- 6 Prevention Through People

Editor

Edward Hardin
(202) 493-1052
ehardin@ballston.uscg.mil

Technical Writer/Designer

Denver Haught
(202) 493-1058
dhaught@ballston.uscg.mil

The *Marine Safety Newsletter* is published by the USCG Marine Safety and Environmental Protection Directorate to collect and disseminate information of general interest to the maritime community. The monthly newsletter prints abstracts of major USCG rulemakings, studies, special projects, and related events. Articles from non-Coast Guard sources may not represent USCG policy or views.

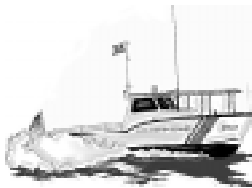
The inclusion of the name of a specific commercial product, commodity, service, training, or company in this publication is for informational purposes only and does not imply endorsement by the United States Coast Guard.

Contents of this publication are not copyrighted unless indicated. If not copyrighted, the material may be reproduced freely; citation of the *Marine Safety Newsletter* as the source is appreciated. Permission to reproduce any copyrighted material must be obtained from the original source.

****Due to budgetary cuts, a complete and updated list of the G-M Studies, G-M Regulatory Projects, and Calendar of Events will not be printed, but are posted separately online.**

www.uscg.mil/hq/g-m/gmhome.htm

May 2000



Busy Hurricane Season Predicted

Forecasters from this year's National Hurricane Conference have predicted that at least seven hurricanes will approach North America.

Forecasters also predicted 11 tropical storms – one less than in 1999, when 12 formed and eight developed into hurricanes, however, not all 8 storms approached North America.

The National Hurricane Conference brings together forecasters and emergency management officials from across the country to discuss advances in predicting the frequency, strength and path of hurricanes, as well as ways to minimize damage and loss of life.

During the past five years, there have been more than 60 named storms in the Atlantic and 41 of them developed into hurricanes.

A Hurricane Watch is issued when hurricane conditions are possible in the area of the watch, usually within 36 hours. At this time, one should get prepared for a possible hurricane. When winds generate to at least 74 m.p.h., the storm is classified as a hurricane. A Hurricane Warning is then issued when the conditions are expected in the area of the warning, within 24 hours.

When in a Warning Area:

- Listen to TV and radio for information
- Fuel and service vehicles
- Inspect and secure mobile home tie downs
- Complete preparation activities such as putting up storm shutters and storing loose objects
- Check batteries, buy canned food, first aid supplies, bottled water, and keep extra cash on hand
- Leave immediately if told to do so.
- If evacuating, leave early, in daylight if possible

If you are caught in a hurricane, be alert for tornadoes, which are often spawned by hurricanes. Also, be aware of the eye of the storm. After this period of calm, hurricane force winds quickly return.

Former Coast Guard Commandant Dies

Admiral Willard J. Smith, a former commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard, has died. He was 89 and was the oldest living former commandant until his death.

A memorial service was held in Atlantic Beach, FL, where he died on April 1.

Smith was born in Suttons Bay, MI, and served as commandant from July 1966 until his retirement in June 1970. During his tenure, he oversaw the Coast Guard's transition from the Treasury Department



to the Department of Transportation in April 1967.

Smith was the first aviator to serve as commandant and held previous posts with the Coast Guard in Cleveland, OH and New London, CT.

Smith's cremated remains were buried in Arlington National Cemetery at 2 p.m. on April 27. Smith's survivors include a daughter and a son.

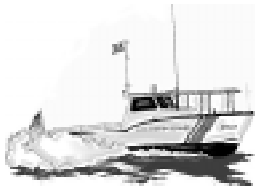
Clinton's Visit to the Coast Guard Academy is Confirmed

The White House confirmed that President Clinton will speak at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy's 119th commencement on May 17, 2000—it will be his last service academy commencement address as a sitting president.

The president alternates commencement addresses among the four service academies and he last spoke to Coast Guard graduates in 1996 where he addressed a crowd of more than 230 cadets and 5,000 of their family and friends. President Clinton spoke about the need for a strong defense in a post-Cold War world, and about the daily heroics of the men and women of the Coast Guard on the high seas.

Recent commencement speakers at the academy have included Rodney E. Slater, secretary of transportation, in 1997; Madeleine K. Albright, secretary of state, in 1998; and retired Gen. Barry R. McCaffrey, head of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, spoke last year.





Mississippi River 8th on Jeopardy List



American Rivers, a national environmental group, announced that the Mississippi River is one of the nation's most endangered waterways because programs to benefit people have been deadly for fish and wildlife.

The Mississippi River and its floodplain are home to over 400 different species of wildlife and to 40 percent of North America's migratory waterfowl. However, projects that have been implemented to change the river's depth and boundaries to make navigation easier and protect nearby residents from floods have harmed marsh and marine life. The alterations have destroyed habitats, kept fish away from spawning areas, and interrupted the natural food chain, according to a report from American Rivers, making its 15th annual evaluation of the health of the nation's rivers.

The Mississippi is ranked eighth in a list of the 13 most-endangered waterways. Besides pointing out problems, American Rivers uses its report to urge policy-makers to rethink programs that might be ecologically unsound or economically unjustifiable.

Other rivers on the list are:

- Missouri River, which flows from Montana to Missouri, where it meets the Mississippi
- Ventura River in California
- Copper River in Arkansas
- River basins in Georgia, Alabama and Florida
- Coal River in West Virginia
- Rio Grande, which flows from Colorado to the Gulf of Mexico
- North Fork of the Feather River in California
- Clear Creek in Houston
- Green River in Colorado and Utah
- Presumpscot River in Maine
- Clark Fork in Montana

CG Requests Feedback on Oil Spill Removal Classification

The Coast Guard is requesting comments on the proposed revisions to the Oil Spill Removal Organization Classification Guidelines. This is the first comprehensive revision to the classification guidelines since 1995. All written comments should be received by May 19, 2000.

The Coast Guard also held a public meeting to discuss the proposed revisions on May 4, 2000.

A copy of the Federal Register Notice, proposed OSRO Guidelines revisions and a list of significant revisions are available for your review at the following web sites:

www.uscg.mil/hq/g-m/gmhome.htm

www.uscg.mil/hq/nsfcc/nsfweb

www.uscg.mil/vrp

For more information concerning the Federal Register Notice and the meeting, please contact Roger Laferriere at (202) 267-0448 or Bob Rinelli at (252) 331-6000 ext. 3034.

CG Reserve Slots Open

The Fifth Coast Guard District has posted its list of available Coast Guard Reserve positions at Mid-Atlantic coastal units from Cape May, NJ, to Wilmington, NC.

As the summer search and rescue season approaches, the Fifth District expects to fill its rescue boat operator, mechanic, and crew positions first. Those interested in such positions should act quickly.

The Student Reserve Program provides paid training and on-the-job training during the academic year.

College students or students in on-the-job training programs can also earn more than \$7,000 toward their education through the Montgomery G.I. Bill.

For more information, call (800) NOW-USCG or (757) 483-8495.

WWW.



What's New on the
World Wide Web

<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-m/gmhome.htm>

Coast Guard Career Central: A Directory of Information on Your Coast Guard Career and/or Your Potential Coast Guard Career

www.uscg.mil/leadership.htm



Supreme Court Upholds Federal Regulations

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that states may not impose equipment and operating standards on vessels navigating state waters different from those imposed by international conventions or federal regulations.

The ruling states that regulations dealing with "general watch procedures, crew English language skills, and training and drills were subject to field preemption under Title II of the Ports and Waterways Safety Act." The verdict stems from lawsuits filed against Washington State's governor by the International Association of Independent Tanker Owners (Intertanko) and the federal government.

The decision reversed a unanimous 1998 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruling that said states can enforce their own maritime laws.

The Court's unanimous decision issued on March 6, 2000, stated, "the State of Washington has enacted legislation in an area where the federal interest has been manifest since the beginning of our Republic and is now well-established."

National Safe Boating Campaign 2000

Each year approximately 800 people die in boating-related accidents – eight out of ten victims are not wearing a life jacket.

In an effort to combat these statistics, the National Safe Boating Council (NSBC), in partnership with the U.S. Coast Guard, the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA), and hundreds of other organizations including the Canadian Safe Boating Council and the Canadian Coast Guard will launch the, "2000 Boat Smart from the Start," North American Safe Boating Campaign.

The campaign will begin during National Safe Boating Week, May 20–26, 2000. It is designed to reach more than 80 million boaters around North America and this year's theme is, "Boat Smart from the Start. Wear Your Life Jacket!"

During National Safe Boating Week, organizations will be displaying exhibits, providing special programs on safe boating, and generating extensive media coverage.

More than 20,000 action kits will be distributed to local campaign coordinators throughout the country to spread the message of safe boating.

For more information, visit:

www.safeboatingcampaign.com

Coast Guard Cutbacks

Admiral James Loy announced in his March 7, 2000, State of the Coast Guard address that the Coast Guard will cut back its operations by 10 percent in order to safeguard its overworked crews and overtaxed equipment.

The cutback translates into 2,000 fewer flying hours and 7,700 cutter hours, however, the cutbacks will not affect search-and-rescue operations. The goal is to keep people and equipment fresh and alert for emergencies that will come, despite safety precautions to prevent them.

The announcement is causing some concern along the shores, where boaters, recreational fishermen, and the commercial-fishing industry rely extensively on the Coast Guard – and where the agency lacks resources because of a lack of funds.

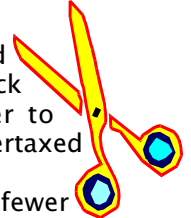
CG Requests Comments Pertaining to New Official Logbook

The Coast Guard is revising the Official Logbook (CG-706B).

The changes include updating citations to the United States Code and the Code of Federal Regulations, providing guidance on the use of the Official Logbook including examples of log entry requirements, and indication what vessel types are required to use the log.

The revision will allow Masters to maintain the log in accordance with laws and regulation while reducing the numbers of entries and total paperwork to do so. The number of pages provided for each type of entry has been re-allocated to better reflect actual use.

The Coast Guard requests comments on its proposed draft of a new Official Logbook. The draft logbook (50 pages in length) is available on the Internet at: www.uscg.mil/hq/g-m/marpers/pers.htm. Comments will accepted through June 16, 2000, and should be directed to Mr. James Cratty, National Maritime Center, (202) 493-1048, e-mail: jcratty@ballston.uscg.mil.





Legal Committee: 81st Session

Committee Agrees Draft Convention on Bunker Oil Liability

At its 81st session held between 27–31 March 2000, the Legal Committee completed its consideration of the draft international convention on civil liability for bunker oil pollution damage. It agreed that the draft convention should be forwarded to a diplomatic conference for adoption. The Committee requested Council that the diplomatic conference be convened for a period of one week, preferably to take place during the first half of 2001.

Provision of Financial Security

The Committee considered a submission – prepared by Norway at the Committee's earlier request – for a protocol to the Athens Convention Relating to the Carriage of Passengers and Their Luggage by Sea, 1974. The protocol is intended to provide for enhanced compensation, to establish a simplified procedure for updating limitation amounts, and to make insurance for the benefit of passengers compulsory.

A key issue is whether the limitation amount in respect of compulsory insurance should be calculated on a per ship or per capita basis.

The Committee discussed the issue at length, with no conclusion being reached.

Most delegates were in favor of the basic text, but some were prepared to consider alternatives. The Committee decided the issue should be further considered, bearing in mind a number of points that were made, including:

- All ships should carry insurance sufficient to provide an adequate level of compensation
- Claimants should have the right to pursue the insurer directly
- Passengers should not suffer simply because of the size of the ship
- The industry view was that two caps on liability were required, that is, per passenger and per ship
- Direct action should be available up to a certain limit but not beyond
- It was desirable to achieve a solution within the mutuality system of current P&I insurance arrangements

- Insurance is only as good as the security behind it
- There is a need to construct a realistic compensation system which could be implemented and which at the same time provides adequate compensation levels.

The Committee recognized the need for further informal discussions to try to narrow the gap between different positions. It also called for greater participation by other interested delegations and observer delegations if progress was to be made.

Joint IMO/ILO Working Group

The Committee considered the findings of the Joint IMO/ILO Ad Hoc Expert Working Group on Liability and Compensation regarding Claims for Death, Personal Injury and Abandonment of Seafarers, which met from 11–15 October 1999, and approved continuation of its work. In his opening remarks the Secretary-General had commended the Working Group's progress. He said he could not think of a more relevant and worthy subject in the legal field requiring cooperation between IMO and the International Labor Organization.

Draft Convention on Wreck Removal

A paper (LEG 81/6) reported on the intercessional work of the correspondence group on wreck removal.

The coordinator of the Correspondence Group highlighted progress on matters such as the definition of wreck, preventive measures and hazard, rights and obligations to remove hazardous wrecks, reporting and locating of wrecks, financial liability for locating, marking and removing wrecks and contribution from cargo. He hoped the Committee could progress speedily in considering the draft convention and would soon be in a position to recommend the convening of a diplomatic conference during the 2002–2003 biennium.

One delegation, supported by other delegations, expressed concern about the proposal to include in the definition of wreck the notion of "uncontrolled ships". In this connection the delegation pointed out that, as part of normal operations, a vessel could be for technical reasons "under no command" for a limited period of time. That vessel, concluded the delegation, should not fall under the definition of wreck.

Prevention Through People



Five Stars for Safety

Small, uninspected passenger vessel operations have expanded dramatically over the last few years, and Alaska has seen its share of this expansion. Thousands of locals and tourists embark on these “6-pack” vessels, so called because they carry six or less passengers, every year.

However, these smaller passenger vessels are uninspected and allowed to operate without life rafts, Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons (EPIRBs), or backup emergency communications. This equates to a higher level of risk for every passenger and crew member.

The Coast Guard in Alaska, in conjunction with local harbor masters and the uninspected passenger vessel industry, has recently implemented a new Five-Star Safety Rating Program to increase the safety level of these vessels. This voluntary program rates vessel owners on their safety upgrades — those that implement all of the program’s suggestions can earn a Five-Star Safety Rating for their craft.

Coast Guard Captain Ed Page, Chief of Marine Safety in Alaska, explained his ideas on this Safety Program in a related press release: “I’m advocating a non-regulatory solution, referred to as the Five-Star Safety Program, for improving the safety of these vessels. . . . This program outlines a suite of recommended safety measures, and is designed to provide safety-conscious operators recognition for their efforts to provide a safer vessel for their passengers.”

With the Five-Star Safety Program, passengers can choose the level of safety they desire. The focus of passengers on increased safety will in turn encourage operators to upgrade their safety equipment and earn five stars.

★
Vessel is in compliance with existing regulations, including the requirements found in 46 CFR, Subchapter C. The operator has a safety-training program and a system of records to show that drills and training have been conducted regularly. The training program must include drills on emergency procedures and the use of safety equipment.

★★
Vessel meets all One-Star requirements, and additionally has a properly installed bilge pump and bilge alarm. If the vessel is designed without a bilge, it must have suitable reserve buoyancy to float the vessel, even if it is in a completely swamped condition.

★★★
Vessel meets all Two-Star requirements, and additionally has a handheld VHF FM radio with a minimum 5 watts of power. A portable satellite phone can be used as an equivalent level of safety.

★★★★
Vessel meets all Three-Star requirements, and additionally has a properly mounted and registered 406 MHz EPIRB, Category I or II.

★★★★★
Vessel meets all Four-Star requirements, and additionally has on board a properly installed and serviced Coast Guard-approved inflatable life raft or inflatable buoyant apparatus (IBA) (canister or valise type) with minimum capacity for all passengers on board. An equivalent level of safety for vessels too small to carry a liferaft or IBA would be floatation that meets Coast Guard standards. In some instances, upon review of the examiner, an inflatable-style commercial grade work boat may be used in place of an approved raft.

Owners and operators of uninspected passenger vessels are encouraged to participate in this voluntary program. An application form may be obtained from local Coast Guard offices in Alaska or via the Internet at: www.akrrt.org/spvtaskforce/6pac/application.html.

For more information, contact LCDR Spencer Wood, 17th Coast Guard District, at (907) 463-2285 or e-mail: swood@cgalaska.uscg.mil.

PRINCIPLES

- Take a Quality Approach
- Honor the Mariner
- Seek Non-Regulatory Solutions
- Share Commitment
- Manage Risk

VISION

To achieve the world’s safest, most environmentally sound and cost-effective marine operations by emphasizing the role of people in preventing casualties and pollution.

GOALS

- Know More
- Train More
- Do More
- Offer More
- Cooperate More

Contact us directly with your PTP story:

Commandant (G-MSE-1), U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, 2100 Second Street, SW, Washington, DC 20593-0001; (202) 267-2997; (202) 267-4816 Fax; e-mail: fldr-he@comdt.uscg.mil

FINAL NOTICE

****If you have received the previous month's hard-copy issue and returned this form to us, **THERE IS NO NEED TO COMPLETE IT AGAIN.** This will be the last hard copy that you receive from us, unless this form is completed and returned.**

In order to control our printing and mailing costs, we would like to remind our readers that the *Marine Safety Newsletter* is also published on the Internet at:

www.uscg.mil/hq/g-m/gmhome.htm

To continue receiving a hard-copy of the *Marine Safety Newsletter* each month, this form must be completed and faxed or mailed back to our office at:

Marine Safety Newsletter
U.S. Coast Guard
National Maritime Center
4200 Wilson Blvd. Suit 510
Arlington, VA 22203-1804
FAX: (202) 493- 1065

We encourage you to use the Internet only if you find it convenient to do so. If you do not wish to use the Internet or do not have access, then complete this form, fax it or mail it back to us, and we will continue to send you the newsletter each month at no charge.

_____ Please continue to MAIL ME a copy of the Marine Safety Newsletter

_____ I want to continue VIA THE INTERNET

Please provide e-mail address: _____

1. Name _____
2. School or Company Affiliation _____
3. Physical Street Address _____
4. Mailing Address _____
5. City _____
6. State _____
7. Zip Code _____
8. Local Telephone # _____
9. Fax # _____
10. Maritime affiliations: _____
(Include information such as Associations, Advisory Committee Memberships, Unions, etc.)
11. Toll Free # (if available) _____
12. Internet Address (if available) _____

**SUBSCRIPTION ENDS WITH THIS ISSUE UNLESS
WE RECEIVE THIS FORM**

MARINE SAFETY NEWSLETTER EDITOR
US COAST GUARD
NATIONAL MARITIME CENTER
4200 WILSON BLVD., SUITE 510
ARLINGTON, VA 22203-1804

**FORWARDING AND ADDRESS
CORRECTION REQUESTED**

Contributions

Marine Safety Newsletter and *Proceedings* magazine welcome manuscript and photo submissions for publication. No payment can be made for manuscripts or photos submitted for publication. However, an author or photo credit byline will be given. The Editor reserves the right to make any editorial changes in manuscripts, which he believes will improve the material without altering the intended meaning. All correspondence should be addressed to: Editor, U.S. Coast Guard, National Maritime Center, 4200 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 510, Arlington, VA 22203-1804.

Deadlines

- The Marine Safety Newsletter is published monthly on the 5th of each month.
- The deadline for articles, calendar events, and regulatory information is on the 25th of the previous month.
- Readers receive their copy of the *Marine Safety Newsletter* around the 15th of each month.

Up to the Minute News

Items missing the deadline for the *Marine Safety Newsletter* are posted on the World Wide Web at:

www.uscg.mil/hq/g-m/gmhome.htm.

Address Changes

If you would like to receive the Marine Safety Newsletter or change your address (be sure to send label or include code number), please call **(202) 493-1056** or fax **(202) 493-1065**.

